Welcome

RYDER CUP TIME AGAIN

Here we are in September already and the vast majority of the golf season is now behind us. We’ve had the Majors, although, as I write, the USPGA, on that brute of a course in Wisconsin, has only just begun.

Whistling Straits is over 7500 yards long. Two par-4s are reputed to be over 500 yards long and there are, count them, 1400 bunkers. Yes, that’s 1400. We gather Bunker stats each year at The Open, and Royal Lytham & St Annes is the course with the most bunkers on the Open rota with a mere 197.

Collectively they trapped 1585 balls at The Open in 2001. The mind boggles about what might happen at Whistling Straits. If you divide 1400 by 18 you get an average of 78 bunkers per hole. How would you fancy being sent out to rake those at the beginning of a day? All in all it’s a typically brutal Pete Dye golf course and one which, I for one, would feel I’d been sent to Hell if I had to play every day in life.

But while the Majors will be finished by the time you read this the most significant golfing event of the year is just around the corner. The Ryder Cup at Oakland Hills, Michigan, will again dominate the sports pages at a time when everyone has just come up for air after the Olympics.

The Superintendent at Oakland Hills is Steven Cook MG, CGCS. Many of you will know him from 2003 when he came over to Harrogate and I’m sure everyone on this side of the pond will wish him well at this particularly stressful and high profile time.

It is a tough old job being in charge of a Ryder Cup venue. I remember talking with the guys at the De Vere Belfry before the last Ryder Cup and they were saying how closely they had worked with Europe’s Captain, Sam Torrance, on ensuring that the fairways were narrowed just about at the driving distance of the longer hitting Americans and the greens slowed to regular European pace. I know Bevan Tattersall recalls proudly being driving distance of the longer hitting Americans

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assessing what was generally recognised to be the greatest team ever assembled.

So good luck for this year’s Cup match, Steven, and good luck to Europe.

TURF CONSULTANT IS REAPPOINTED

Leading independent turf consultant Robert Lycock has been appointed to provide agronomic support for a fourth consecutive year to the 11 Course Managers responsible for 16 golf courses at Marriott Hotel and Country Clubs throughout the UK.

In addition to providing technical advice and assistance on all aspects of turf and soil management, Robert’s role also involves the provision of detailed soil and plant analyses as required by the individual Course Managers.

Announcing the reappointment David MacLaren director of golf operations for Marriott UK commented, “We have seen a sustained rise in the year round standard of all 16 Marriot golf courses over the past three years. Much of the improvement is down to Robert who has provided us with first-class technical and practical support, working in harmony with our course managers and their staff, all of whom do a superb job.

Kenny MacKay, Senior Course Manager said, “We regard Robert both as a partner and a great help to the individual course managers. His regular targeted assessments of course quality enable us to keep a close eye on progress year on year.”

RANSONES JACOBSEN DISTRIBUTION

Ransomes Jacobsen Ltd has confirmed that its distribution agreement with Scottish Grass Machinery Ltd (SGM), for the sale of Ransomes Jacobsen products in Scotland, will come to an end on November 7 this year.

An announcement will be made shortly regarding future arrangements for the sale of Ransomes Jacobsen products in Scotland, but SGM will remain an authorised distributor until 7 November.